

101 N. Fourth Ave., Suite 105 Sandpoint, ID 83864

Phone: (208) 265-9092 • Fax: (208) 265-0754

www.tristatecouncil.org • e-mail: tristatecouncil@sandpoint.net

To: Senator Erickson and the Natural Resources Committee

From: Tri-State Water Quality Council

Subject: Support For Senate Bill 200

Date: 1/23/09

The Clark Fork-Pend Oreille river system is vital to the quality of life in a watershed that spans three states. Citizens, business, industry, government and environmental groups are united in the Tri-State Water Quality Council (Council) to improve water quality in this watershed. The Council accomplishes its mission through mutual respect, collaboration, science and education

Since its formation in 1993, the Council has taken an active role in reducing the impacts of nutrients like phosphorus on area water bodies by implementing the Clark Fork Pend Oreille Basin Management Plan. A product of the plan was the Council's Voluntary Nutrient Reduction Plan (VNRP), which began in 1998. The VNRP was a collaboration of the Council and the four major nutrient dischargers on the Montana portion of the Clark Fork River. The VNRP leveraged over \$50 million of investment in new wastewater treatment systems and sewer connections.

With its history of favoring nutrient reduction, the Council respectfully wishes to support the passage of Senate Bill 200 that restricts the phosphorus content in dishwashing detergents used by local residents near impaired waterways. While phosphorus does improve the performance of dishwashing detergent, there are substitutes available on the market today that perform to the same standard. While this bill will decrease phosphorus loads emerging from septic tanks to waterways, it will also decrease phosphorus loads entering community wastewater treatment systems by 15-20%. Phosphorus is the most costly material to remove from wastewater. This bill will simplify the work of the wastewater operator and provide them a greater capacity to deal with this and other nutrients in wastewater from other sources. It will also save Montana ratepayers millions of dollars.

Phosphorus bans in laundry and other detergents are not new and several western Montana Counties have already passed ordinances to that effect. A 1989 phosphorus ban on laundry detergents led by Missoula City-County Health was successful in reducing

SEMATE NATURAL RESOURCES

EXHIBIT NO.

BILL NO. SB20

phosphorus in wastewater inflow and phosphorus discharged to the Clark Fork River. This bill acts to further expand the reach of those ordinances dedicated to cleaning up local waterways and will have a similar effect to the laundry detergent ban.

Sincerely,

John Sugden, Program Director